

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 004786

SIPDIS

USTR FOR NOVELLI/SAUMS
USDOC FOR 4520/ITA/MAC/ONE/PTANOS
USDOC FOR TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION - KEN FERGUSON
OPIC FOR TARBUS/OWAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [BEXP](#) [ECPS](#) [ECON](#) [IS](#) [JO](#) [OPIC](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. FIRM INTERESTED IN CALL CENTERS IN JORDAN

1. (u) Summary. In an initiative that it sees both as a promising business venture and an element of support for regional peace, the U.S. firm Stream International is seriously looking at Jordan as a site for an international call service center that would employ over 300 technically skilled Jordanian workers. Modeled on a venture in northern Ireland, the initiative could eventually be expanded to the West Bank and Gaza. Stream says that if it ironed out some technical details, including telecommunications support, the project could be up and running next year. End Summary.

2. (u) Craig Weinstein, Director of Corporate Services of Massachusetts-based Stream International, visited Amman in early August to assess the potential of Jordan as a site for one of Stream's international call service centers (call centers). Stream, a subsidiary of the U.S. electronics giant Solecron, currently has such centers in 24 U.S. and foreign locations, including Londonderry and Mumbai. These facilities serve clients that include companies like Dell, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft and Morgan Stanley by providing centers that customers can call or email for technical and other service support. In Jordan's case, a center would service Arabic-speaking callers from the region as well as English-speaking callers from North America and Europe.

3. (u) Weinstein said that his company's interest in Jordan and the region more broadly was an outgrowth of its association with peace through economic development initiatives in northern Ireland. He cited Senator Mitchell and the U.S. American International Group (AIG) as supporters of this work. (The Ambassador had received an introductory letter for Weinstein from American International Group Vice Chairman Frank Wisner.) Weinstein said that if the project was successful in Jordan, he foresaw similar operations in the West Bank and Gaza, the political environment permitting.

4. (u) Weinstein, whose visit was coordinated by the palace's economic division and the local Century Investment Group, told the Ambassador and econ chief how he was impressed by the infrastructure he found in Jordan. This included a favorable business climate, a good telecommunications infrastructure, and the availability of educated, technically-inclined and English-speaking potential employees. The project involves a substantial training component for 300-400 potential employees. This includes training in call center management as well as in the technical subjects on which employees would provide phone support. While further discussions were needed, Weinstein thought Stream could move relatively quickly, with groundbreaking later this year and a start-up in the first half of 2003. The next steps will be discussed at a Solecron board of directors meeting in September and a conference in November at Ulster University that will review linkages between northern Ireland and the Middle East.

5. (u) Among the issues requiring further discussion is access to telecommunications. Weinstein said he had had positive discussions with the Minister of Telecommunications and Jordan Telecom (JT) about using (JT's) fiber optic links to Europe to carry the volume of telecom traffic initially expected. Eventually, however, calls would have to be managed through a company-wide voice over IP network. Voice over IP, however, is not currently permitted in Jordan in order to protect Jordan Telecom's international gateway monopoly. Although the issue is being studied by both Jordan Telecom and by the new telecom regulator, this could therefore require some policy innovation. However, Weinstein did not think this would be a major obstacle, as a new closed network would not detract from the volume of Jordan Telecom's traffic. We also called to his attention the fiber optic backbone project being developed by Seattle-based Real Time Communications. Berry